

**REMARKS:**

Claim 1 has been amended, Claims 2, 6, and 9-15 were previously canceled, Claims 19-20 were presented in the previous Amendment, and new Claim 21 is presented for consideration by the Examiner. Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8, and 16-21 are currently pending in the application.

In view of the following comments, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8 and 16-18, and favorable action on Claims 19-21.

Initially, Examiner Phi is thanked for the courtesies extended to Sally Ferrett during the personal interview conducted on November 7, 2003.

During the interview, differences between the claimed subject matter and the Vyvyan et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,564,789) box beam were discussed. In particular, it was discussed that the spacing of the longerons of the claimed truss boom allows one of the ladder shaped structures to nest between the longerons of the opposed ladder shaped structure when the truss boom is flattened. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the box beam in an expanded and in a flattened condition, respectively. Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize this feature. Support for the claim language is found at Figures 3 and 4, and at page 13, lines 7-17.

Vyvyan et al. does not disclose at least the Claim 1 feature that the first and second longerons of the first rigid ladder shaped structure are spaced apart from each other less than the third and fourth longerons are spaced apart from each other, so that when the truss boom is flattened the first ladder shaped structure nests within the third and fourth longerons of the second ladder shaped structure and the first, second, third and fourth longerons are substantially coplanar to permit compact stowing. Nor is there any guidance in Vyvyan et al. to modify the Vyvyan et al. box beam to have the features set forth in Claim 1.

Dependent Claims 2-5, 7-8, and 16-18 are allowable for at least the same reason that Claim 1 is allowable. Attention is also drawn to the discussion regarding Claim 17 set forth in the Amendment filed on October 8, 2003, pointing out features of Claim 17 not found in Vyvyan et al.

For at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants request withdrawal of the rejections of Claims 1, 3-5, 7-8 and 16-18.

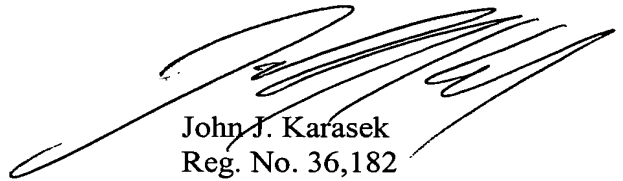
The Amendment filed on October 8, 2003 pointed out several features of Claims 19 and 20 not found in Vyvyan et al. New Claim 21 is also presented for examination to set

forth subject matter to which the Applicants are believed to be entitled. Favorable action on Claims 19-21 is respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to address a minor informality at page 13 identified during a review of the application.

All of the outstanding matters having been addressed, Applicants request an early indication of the allowability of the application, in the form of a Notice of Allowance. Should any questions arise with regard to this Response, or with regard to the application in general, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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